



Fact Sheet:  
**Katrina “Lessons Learned”  
Legislation**  
Committee on Homeland Security  
Peter T. King, Chairman

**H.R. 5351: Lessons Learned and Implemented**

**Lessons Learned: Catastrophic Planning**

- Directs the Secretary of Homeland Security to release a Federal catastrophic emergency plan;
- Requires States and urban areas to update catastrophic emergency plans and to include evacuation and shelter-in-place procedures for the general population and those with special needs;
- Requires States and urban areas to test catastrophic plans through regular exercises and to implement lessons learned if they want DHS grant funding; and
- Directs the Secretary to create an emergency support function for volunteers and donations.

**Lessons Learned: Emergency Communications**

- Elevates the importance of emergency communications within DHS and enhances accountability by establishing an Assistant Secretary for Emergency Communications;
- Mandates a National Emergency Communications Strategy to set goals and timeframes for the achievement of redundant, sustainable, and interoperable emergency communications systems;
- Requires State and local governments to develop Statewide Interoperable Communications Plans before being able to use DHS grant funds for emergency communications; and
- Accelerates the development of national standards for emergency communications capabilities.

**Lessons Learned: Regional Offices**

- Establishes DHS Regional Offices and Regional Directors to work in partnership with state, local, and tribal governments and other first responders to ensure coordination and integration of regional preparedness, response, mitigation, and recovery activities;
- Grants the Regional Director, in a time of crisis, the ability to coordinate and direct the federal response within the operational area, and make operational decisions without having to obtain approval from headquarters, vastly improving response time;
- Establishes Regional Advisory Councils composed of emergency managers, emergency response and support providers, the private sector, and Federal, State, local, and tribal officials; and
- Establishes a Gulf Coast Long-Term Recovery Office to provide assistance to residents recovering from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

**Lessons Learned: Medical Preparedness and Response**

- Establishes a Chief Medical Officer to coordinate DHS’ activities related to medical preparedness and response, bio-surveillance and detection, and other medical and public health issues;
- Authorizes the Metropolitan Medical Response System, which provides grants to local governments to improve response during the initial hours of public health crises or mass-casualty events; and
- Re-authorizes the National Disaster Medical Response System, which supports Federal agencies in managing and coordinating the Federal medical response to acts of terrorism, natural disasters, and other emergencies.

**Lessons Learned: Emergency Preparedness**

- Requires DHS to develop national standards and a comprehensive program for the training of homeland security personnel and first responders at all levels of government;
- Strengthens current DHS preparedness programs, including the National Training Program and the National Exercise Program;
- Consolidates DHS' numerous citizen and community preparedness activities and programs into one office;
- Permits State and local governments to use DHS grant funds to hire qualified intelligence analysts; and
- Directs the Secretary to establish "essential capabilities" that describe the planning, personnel, equipment, training, and exercises that all levels of government should possess or to which they should have access.

**Lessons Learned: Emergency Response**

- Requires DHS to revise the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the National Response Plan (NRP) to, among other things, ensure the effective use of emergency response providers at emergency scenes and improve the utilization of resources at all levels of government;
- Directs the Secretary to establish the NIMS and NRP Integration Center (NIC) to develop a national program for NIMS and NRP education and training, accelerate the credentialing of emergency response providers, develop national standards for resource typing, and other NIMS and NRP duties;
- Encourages more effective use of the private sector in responding to catastrophic incidents; and
- Authorizes the National Urban Search and Rescue Response System to provide a national network of search and rescue resources to assist State, local, and tribal governments.

**Lessons Learned: Emergency Logistics**

- Establishes a regional Pre-positioned Equipment Program to replenish personal protective equipment, search and rescue equipment, communications equipment, and other critical assets;
- Accelerates the development of a National Asset Inventory Program to better manage and deploy Federal emergency response capabilities;
- Directs the Secretary to create a small business database to facilitate faster Federal disaster recovery; and
- Provides funding to administer the Emergency Management Assistance Compact and enhance coordination with Federal, State, and local officials.

**Lessons Learned: Prevention of Waste, Fraud, and Abuse**

- Mandates better oversight of federal benefits, and establishes proper internal management controls to prevent and detect waste, fraud, and abuse;
- Installs databases that will collect and store information on eligible aid recipients and track disbursements and payment records; and
- Requires a regular review of the aid disbursement process by the DHS Inspector General; Requires the Secretary to certify to Congress annually that proper waste, fraud, and abuse controls are in place and operating.

**Lessons Learned: Professional Development**

- Directs the Secretary to establish a graduate-level homeland security education program for Federal, State, local, and tribal officials with homeland security or emergency management responsibilities; and
- Establishes a National Exercise Simulation Center, similar to the Joint Warfighting Simulation Center, to allow officials at levels of government and emergency response providers to exercise incident management in a simulated environment.